

Edward Payson Call Arena Stage papers

Edward Payson Call Arena Stage papers
1974-1977



Title Statement

Edward Payson Call Arena Stage papersGuide to Edward Payson Call Arena Stage papers C0559

Subtitle: Edward Payson Call Arena Stage papers

Author: Meghan Glasbrenner

Publication Statement

Publisher: George Mason University. Libraries. Special Collections Research Center

Fenwick Library, MS2FL
4400 University Dr.
Fairfax, Virginia 22030
Business Number: 703-993-2220
Fax Number: 703-993-8911
speccoll@gmu.edu
URL: <https://scrc.gmu.edu>



December 3, 2025

Profile Description

Creation: This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on 2025-12-04 07:01:43 -0500.

Language Usage: Description is written in: English, Latin script.

Descriptive Rules: Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

C0559

Unit ID

/repositories/2/resources/762

Unit Date

1974-1977

Language

English

Abstract

Materials collected and created by director Edward Payson Call while directing productions of The Front Page, The Tot Family, and Catsplay at Arena Stage in the 1970s.

Creator

Call, Edward Payson

Extent

.75 Linear Feet 2 boxes, 1 map case

Physical Location

R 73, C 2, S 3 Map Case 27.2

Repository

George Mason University. Libraries. Special Collections Research Center

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

There are no access restrictions.

Use Restrictions

The copyright and related rights status of this collection have not been evaluated (See <http://rightsstatements.org/vocab/CNE/1.0/>)

Acquisition Information

Collection donation facilitated by Alison Irvin of Arena Stage. Original donor was Marcia Carter.

Processing Information

Processing completed by Meghan Glasbrenner in October 2025. Inventory assistance provided by Chance Jimenez. Finding aid completed by Meghan Glasbrenner in December 2025.

Preferred Citation

Edward Payson Call Arena Stage papers, C0559, Special Collections Research Center, George Mason University Libraries

Biographical and Historical Information

Edward Payson Call was born on August 10, 1928 and spent over 50 years working in the theatre, beginning his career in New York City in the late 1950s working as a Broadway stage manager. In 1963, he joined the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis, Minnesota as a member of the inaugural artistic staff working alongside namesake director Tyrone Guthrie. Throughout the 1960s-1970s, Payson Call worked as a director at numerous regional theatres across the country, including three productions at Arena Stage in the mid-late 1970s. The Front Page initially ran from December 1974 – January 1975 and again from April – June 1976 as part of the "All American Repertory" along with Death of a Salesman directed by Zelda Fichandler and Our Town directed by Alan Schneider. The Tot Family ran from January – February 1976 and his final directing credit at Arena Stage, Catsplay, ran from March – April 1977. In 1980, he was appointed as the founding Artistic Director of the Denver Center Theatre Company in Colorado, a position he held for five years. In the 1990s, after moving to Seattle, Washington, he continued working as a freelance director and teacher in numerous locations across the country, and in 1992 founded Seattle's Young Shakespeare Workshop. He passed away on February 1, 2023 at the age of 94.

One of the first not-for-profit theatres in the United States, as well as a pioneer of the regional theatre movement, Arena Stage was the first regional theatre to transfer a production to Broadway (The Great White Hope, 1967), the first invited by the U.S. State Department to tour the Soviet Union, and the first to receive a Tony Award. During the 1960s, Arena garnered international renown in its new space: the Arena Stage Theatre. The new building, located at Sixth Street and Maine Avenue SW, was the first playhouse built in Washington, D.C. since 1895. Generosity on the part of David Lloyd Kreeger, and others, led to the construction of the new "Kreeger Theatre," which opened formally on January 15, 1971. Today, Arena Stage performs to over 250,000 patrons during a September to June season and employs nearly 200 theatre professionals.

Scope and Content

A collection of materials, including notes, set designs, scripts, photographs, reviews, programs, and correspondence, collected and created by director Edward Payson Call. Materials relate to Payson Call's work

as a director at Arenas Stage on three productions: The Front Page, The Tot Family, and Catsplay. The bulk of the materials cover his work on The Tot Family, which includes several early script drafts by different translators and with different title variations.

Related Materials

The Special Collections Research Center holds other collections related to Arenas Stage, including the Arenas Stage records and the Zelda Fichandler papers.

Keywords

Theater
Performing arts
Theater -- Washington (D.C.)
Theater -- United States
Theater -- Production and direction
Arenas Stage (Organization : Washington, D.C.)
Fichandler, Zelda, 1924-2016

Bibliography

"Arenas Stage: Production History." n.d. Accessed December 3, 2025.
<https://www.arenastage.org/contentassets/bdb18ac78fb64b658344bd50f91e0e37/production-history.pdf>.
Emmick Family Funeral & Cremation Services. n.d. "Edward Payson Call Obituary." Accessed December 3, 2025. <https://www.emmickfunerals.com/obituaries/edward-call>.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged chronologically and by production title and then by material type or function.

Description of Subordinate Components

The Front Page, The National Theatre at the Old Vic program

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/393900

Unit Date September 1973

Mixed Materials 1 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

Letters from Zelda Fichandler to Edward re: The Front Page

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/393901

Unit Date circa 1974

Mixed Materials 1 (box)

Container 2 (folder)

General letters to Edward re: The Front Page

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/393902

Unit Date circa December 1974

Mixed Materials 1 (box)

Container 3 (folder)

The Front Page at Arena Stage program, photographs, and ticket envelope

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/393903

Unit Date 1974-1975

Mixed Materials 1 (box)

Container 4 (folder)

The Front Page newspaper clippings

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/393904

Unit Date circa December 1974, 1976

Mixed Materials 1 (box)

Container 5 (folder)

Note and sketch to Edward from Gary Bayer, Hildy in The Front Page

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/393905

Unit Date circa 1974

Mixed Materials 1 (box)

Container 6 (folder)

God Bless the Major! (also known as Tóték, The Tot Family, also spelled Toth) script with edits

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/393906

Unit Date circa 1974-1976

Mixed Materials 1 (box)

Container 7 (folder)

Scope and Contents

Written by István Örkény, translated from the Hungarian by Mari Kuttna

The Tot Family (also known as Tóték, also spelled Toth) rewritten script with edits

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/393907

Unit Date circa 1975

Mixed Materials 1 (box)

Container 8 (folder)

Scope and Contents

First 22 pages are handwritten, rest are typed

The Tot Family (also known as Tóték, also spelled Toth) script with annotations

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/393908

Unit Date circa 1975-1976

Mixed Materials 1 (box)

Container 9 (folder)

Scope and Contents

Written by István Örkény, translated by Michael Kitka, Jerry V. Pickering, and Robert E. Sarlos

The Tot Family (also spelled Toth) script with edits

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/393909

Unit Date circa 1975-1976

Mixed Materials 1 (box)

Container 10 (folder)

Scope and Contents

Written by István Örkény, translated by Michael Kitka, Jerry V. Pickering, and Robert E. Sarlos. Item is labeled as "Script #3".

The Tot Family (also spelled Toth) director's script

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/393910

Unit Date circa 1975-1976

Mixed Materials 1 (box)

Container 11 (folder)

Scope and Contents

Original titled Tóték, written by István Örkény, note written on title page "English version by E.P.C. – used version credited below, another translation by Mari Kuttna and the French language version". Item is labeled as "Script #28".

"Memo, Zelda's Big Little Book" re: The Tot Family (also spelled Toth)

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/393911

Unit Date circa 1975-1976

Mixed Materials 1 (box)

Container 12 (folder)

Scope and Contents

Handwritten production notes from Zelda to Edward

Letters from Zelda Fichandler to Edward re: The Tot Family (also spelled Toth)

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/393912

Unit Date July 1975 – January 1976

Mixed Materials 1 (box)

Container 13 (folder)

General letters to Edward re: The Tot Family (also spelled Toth)

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/393913

Unit Date October 1975 – August 1976

Mixed Materials 1 (box)

Container 14 (folder)

Scope and Contents

Includes birthday telegram from parents and correspondence regarding Edward's potential work at the Great Lakes Shakespeare Festival.

The Tot Family (also spelled Toth) Arena Stage production general materials

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/393914

Unit Date circa 1975-1976

Mixed Materials 1 (box)

Container 15 (folder)

Scope and Contents

Includes reviews for non-Arena productions of various translations of Örkény's play and Arena Stage program for Waiting for Godot.

The Tot Family (also spelled Toth) Arena Stage production meeting minutes and memos

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/393915

Unit Date December 16, 1975 – January 2, 1976

Mixed Materials 2 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

The Tot Family (also spelled Toth) Arena Stage production programs and reviews

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/393916

Unit Date January – February 1976

Mixed Materials 2 (box)

Container 2 (folder)

The Tot Family (also spelled Toth) Arena Stage production photographs

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/393917

Unit Date 1976

Mixed Materials 2 (box)

Container 3 (folder)

Catsplay script with edits

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/393918

Unit Date circa 1977

Mixed Materials 2 (box)

Container 4 (folder)

Scope and Contents

Written by István Örkény, translated by Clara Gyorgyey

Catsplay Arena Stage production general materials

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/393919

Unit Date 1977

Mixed Materials 2 (box)

Container 5 (folder)

Catsplay Arena Stage production meeting minutes and memos

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/393920

Unit Date February 8 – March 6, 1977

Mixed Materials 2 (box)

Container 6 (folder)

Catsplay Arena Stage production program and reviews

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/393921

Unit Date March – April 1977

Mixed Materials 2 (box)

Container 7 (folder)

Arena Stage production (The Tot Family [also spelled Toth] and Catsplay) set design plans

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/393922

Unit Date circa 1975-1976, 1977

Mixed Materials 27.2 (Map-case)

Scope and Contents

Catsplays design is pencil sketch on transparent paper, The Tot Family is grounds plan with two pieces on brown paper.